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ABSTRACT

Data for this study of the role and effectiveness of state depository libraries in assuring the acquisition and distribution of state publications were collected via a two-page questionnaire containing 10 open- and closed-ended questions. This questionnaire was sent to the state documents authorities in each of the 50 states in March 1989, and responses were received from 41 of the depository programs for a return rate of 82%. Only 14 states, or 34% of the respondents, indicated the presence of selective depositories. Nearly 76% of the states indicated that at least one out-of-state library served as a repository for their respective publications. Respondents in 67% of the states estimated that between 21% and 50% of state-generated materials were improperly deposited by the issuing agencies, and only 24% reported that they had a document tracking system. Eleven states reported having a microformat program, and seven states reported having centralized publishing. It was concluded that, until tracking systems and centralized publishing are prevalent, librarians will need to exert more time and energy in educating and informing state agencies of the value of depositing publications in the depository system. Two tables and two charts present data collected by the survey. (23 references) (SD)

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STATE DEPOSITORY PROGRAMS:

THE ACQUISITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLICATIONS

by

Michael L. Mitchell

A Research Paper Submitted In

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Requirement for the Degree of

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INTRODUCTION

In addition to working with the universe of federal publications, many libraries must contend with the universe of state government publications (documents). Publications from both levels of government present librarians with similar problems. The problems librarians must address include the acquisition and distribution of documents, bibliographic control, public accessibility, and utilization of the information. At the federal level, Congress established in 1813 a document distribution system that has evolved into the Federal Depository System.[1] The depository concept is recognized by most state governments as a means of providing public access to their respective publications. This paper will detail the role and effectiveness of state depository programs in assuring the acquisition and distribution of state publications.

From the literature it is apparent that more monographs and journal articles are available in the area of federal rather than state programs. Individual states and document groups regularly produce bibliographies of state generated titles and sources of state publications, but current information regarding state depository programs is limited. Though there is not an abundance of available material,

Margaret Lane's reference handbook serves as an excellent source of background information.[2] Individuals from various states have outlined their respective programs through state reports, journal articles, and ERIC documents.

In addition to a review of the literature, a survey was sent to state document authorities in each of the fifty states. The survey was designed to acquire a current profile of states' depository programs. This data along with published material was analyzed and used in this assessment of state depository programs.

ACQUISITION

Librarians who work with state publications would agree with the Hernon and McClure statement, "Publications of state and local governments are infrequently utilized to their potential, but contain useful, even vital, information for research purposes and decision making."[3] Often the best source of current statistical and informational material, these publications can fill information voids in both research and resource libraries. And, as Lane points out, "timeliness is one of the most important attributes of state publications."[4] State publications are a means of providing residents with timely information, but the publications also serve to document and preserve the events or history of state government and the State.

The vital information provided in state publications can be useful to researchers outside a respective state, but the

utmost importance of such information at the state level cannot be overemphasized. Accessibility of state publications and information to the residents of the state must be a primary goal of government. Lane states, "Their purpose is to impart information to the citizen who has paid for the gathering and dissemination of the information through taxes."[5]

Most states have established regulations and legislation in an effort to enhance the accessibility of information for the public. Elements often identified in such legislation comprise of established state depository libraries, publication distribution centers, and requirements for deposit of documents by agencies. Commonly the distribution process or clearinghouse functions are coordinated by state libraries.[6]

It is essential that state depository laws are enacted if governments are going to systematically make their publications available to the public. The success rate of such legislation is often dependent upon the proactive atmosphere and cooperation between state agencies and the library depository participants (the publications clearinghouse). Hernon and McClure state, "Simply developing depository laws and procedures at either the state or local level will not necessarily lead to better access and user services."[7] As David Myers reported after a 1980 regional state depository clearinghouse meeting, "librarians conveyed a sense of excitement about the information potential of state publications and their involvement in the dissemination of that information. [and] The problem of getting documents from state agencies to

the depository library was thoroughly discussed."[8] Just as state seat belt laws do not insure that all motorists will wear them, state depository laws do not insure that all agencies will deposit their publications. Even when mandated by state statutes, the acquisition of state publications for a depository program remains a problem for librarians. As Lane puts it, "the receiving of publications...is never entirely automatic."[9]

DISTRIBUTION

State distribution programs like the Federal Depository System have designated depository libraries. The number of repositories provided for an individual state's publications is though, far fewer than the number available for federal publications. Data gathered from the 1979 Government Documents Round Table (GODORT) survey indicated the median number of state depositories per state as nineteen.[10] Libraries are usually categorized as either full (complete) or partial (selective) depositories. A complete depository, e.g., a state library, receives from the distribution center, copies of all available state publications. A complete status does not always require the library to maintain or keep all titles received.[11] Librarians may be allowed to weed the collection and discard documents they deem irrelevant to their patrons' needs. Public access to publications is always a major concern, but retention of some titles may be for no more than a year.[12]

As the term may suggest, selective depositories do not receive all available publications. The selection of titles is "made by the receiving libraries, by the distributing agencies, or by the issuing agencies."[13] The GODORT survey reported only fourteen states having selective depositories.[14] It would seem that maintaining selective depositories would require the distribution center staff to provide more attention to the individual depositories' collection needs. Assuring that the proper publications, predetermined by a profile, i.e., based on subject matter or issuing agency, are being distributed to the depositories, can place an additional work load on the distribution staff. By contrast, distributing all available copies of a publication and allowing the receiving library staff to determine which titles are relevant to their collection saves the distribution center staff time that would be used to match publications to collection profiles. Allowing the receiving library staff to discard titles cost the state money in printing charges for publications that may never reach segments of the public.

Whether supplying complete or selective depositories, the distribution center must have a sufficient number of copies to distribute. And as noted earlier, preservation and accessibility of information is of primary importance to librarians. To varying degrees microforms have been used by states to meet these needs. States including Delaware, Iowa, Hawaii, Colorado, Nebraska, and Minnesota have initiated micropublishing programs where most, if not all, publications

are distributed in microformat.[15] As officials in Minnesota found, the conversion of paper copies to microfiche not only increased the number of items available in the depository system, but it also reduced program cost.[16] Knowing that librarians generally are in need of more space for collections, microforms would lessen this concern and have the potential of increasing the accessibility of titles for the public.

Users' satisfaction with microfiche or microfilm on a scale of one to ten (ten being the highest level) would surely rate below the mid-range. But as Weech states, "Given the traditional difficulties involved in acquiring and accessing state government publications, microformats may meet with less reader resistance than other materials."[17] Marilyn Moody notes several pros and cons to microformat depository programs, but her conclusion is that "the success of any state depository program rests with factors that are the same whether the program is a microformat or paper format."[18] Her list of factors include strong depository laws, bibliographic control, significant budget and staffing.[19]

THE SURVEY

A two page questionnaire containing ten questions, both closed-ended and open-ended, was sent to each of the fifty states' documents programs in March 1989 (see Appendix A). With each survey a cover letter and a self-addressed, stamped envelope was enclosed (see Appendix B). Addresses for the state programs were obtained from the Directory of Government

Document Collections & Librarians.[20] No deadline was given for returning the questionnaire and the last response was received as late as July.

Responses were received from 41 of the 50 depository programs, for a return rate of 82%. State library personnel from Alabama and Wyoming were unable to answer all survey questions as these two states have no formal depository program in place. All other surveys were generally completed in their entirety.

Table 1 reflects responses made to the following questions: (a) the number of depository libraries for each state, (b) the number of selective and complete depositories, (c) the number of instate and out-of-state depositories, and (d) the number of staff working directly with the program (FTE). Only fourteen states or 34% of the respondents indicated the presence of selective depositories. Three of these fourteen states added that all available copies of a title are distributed. This response may indicate that all depositories for the three states would meet full depository status if sufficient numbers of copies are available for distribution. The number of states reporting the existence of selective depositories is consistent with the number reported in the GODORT survey in 1979.[21]

Nearly 76% of the states indicated at least one out-of-state library serving as a repository for their respective publications. As it is a practice of the Library of Congress and the Center for Research Libraries to collect state documents, one could presume that states usually designate either or both

Table 1.--Number and status of state depository libraries including FTE for distribution centers

State	No. Depository Libraries			Instate Libraries	Out-of-State Libraries	FTE
	Selective	Complete	Total			
Alabama	N/A (f)	N/A (f)	N/A (f)	N/A (f)	N/A (f)	N/A (f)
Alaska	0	20	20	14	6	2
Arizona	0	1	1	1	0	2.5
California	132	15	147	147	0 (g)	5
Connecticut	9	6	15	13	2	2
Delaware	34	5	35 (b)	35	0	.5
Florida	0	23	23	23	0	3
Idaho	0	20	20	19	1	1.5
Illinois	0	36	36	30	6	3
Indiana	14	1	15	13	2	2
Iowa	21	25	46	44	2	3
Kansas	8	21	29	26	3	1.33
Louisiana	39	2	41	38	3	2
Maine	0	13 (b)	13 (b)	13 (b)	1 (b)	1.2
Maryland	0	16	16	15	1	3
Massachusetts	N/A (a)	N/A (a)	5	4	1	— (h)
Michigan	0	59	59	48	11	3
Minnesota	0	36	36	36	0	2 (c)
Mississippi	0	33	33	31	2	1
Missouri	25	15	40	38	2	2
Montana	0	16 (b)	19 (b)	16 (b)	3	2.5
Nevada	11 (d)	1	12	10	2	1
New Hampshire	0	20	— (h)	19	— (h)	2
New Jersey	0	63 (i)	63	56	7	2
New Mexico	0	24	24	22	2	1
New York	265	40	305	305	0	5
North Carolina	9	8	17	17	0	4
North Dakota	0	6	6	5	1	1
Ohio	78 (d)	1	79	53	26	1
Oklahoma	0	16	16	14	2	3.5

Table 1.--Number and status of state depository libraries including FTE for distribution centers (con't)

State	No. Depository Libraries			Instate Libraries	Out-of-State Libraries	FTE
	Selective	Complete	Total			
Pennsylvania	0	77	77	59	18	.25-.33
Rhode Island	11	12	23 (b)	23 (b)	2 (b)	1
South Carolina	0	12 (e)	12 (e)	10 (e)	2	2.5
South Dakota	0	10	10	8	2	1
Tennessee	0	6	6	6	0	1
Texas	0	52	52	50	2	3
Vermont	-- (h)	-- (h)	-- (h)	-- (h)	-- (h)	-- (h)
Virginia	0	15	15	13	2	1.5
West Virginia	0	14	14	13	2	1
Wisconsin	35 (d)	12	47	45	2	.75
Wyoming	0	2	2	N/A (f)	N/A (f)	N/A (f)

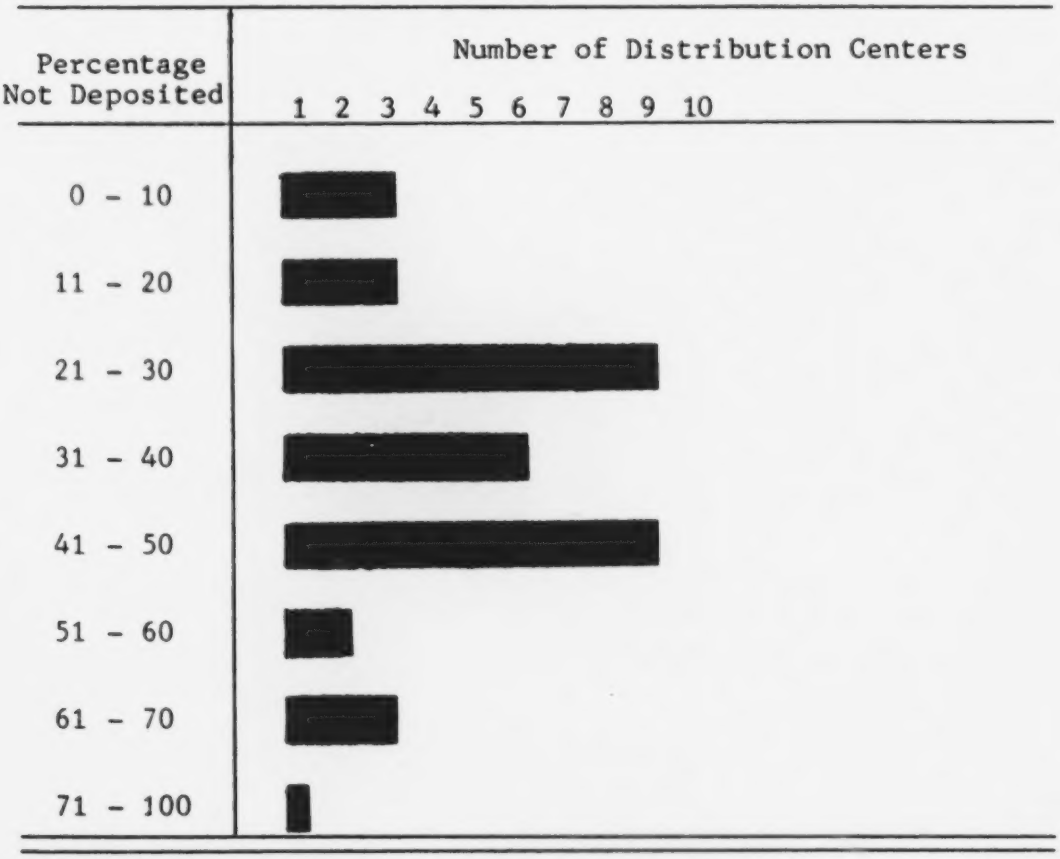
(a) all available copies are sent (b) discrepancy in figures provided by state (c) total does not include staff assistance from Dept. of Administration (d) selective distribution the result of insufficient number of copies received from issuing agencies (e) in addition to State Library (f) no depository program in place (g) 29 out-of-state libraries on exchange program (h) information not supplied by state (i) out-of-state libraries may discard titles received.

of these libraries as depositories.[22]

Clearinghouses can only distribute publications to depositories if copies are properly deposited by the issuing agencies. To gain a better appreciation for the amount of state publications that may never reach the distribution center, state authorities were asked in the survey to estimate the percentage they believed were not properly deposited. Thirty-six respondents answered the question with the median percentage reported as 40%. Nearly 67% of those answering the question estimated between 21 to 50% of state generated materials are

not properly deposited in the depository program (see Chart 1). Realizing the percentages reported represent only estimates, and are not actual, the results may reflect respondents faith, or lack of faith in the effectiveness of depository legislation. It was reported earlier this year that just one third of the Wisconsin state documents were held by one or more depository libraries.[23] Reasons given for such a low percentage of holdings included, vagueness in statutory language regarding the distribution of publications and decentralized publishing.[24]

Chart 1.--Estimated percentage not properly deposited in distribution centers (clearinghouses)**



**Five state authorities did not respond to this question.

Table 2.--Presence of tracking system, nonprint policy, microformat program, or centralized publishing; Y (yes) or N (no)

STATE	Tracking System	Nonprint program	Microformat Program	Centralized Publishing
Alabama	N	N	N (1)	N
Alaska	N	N	Y (8)	N
Arizona	N	N	N	N
California	N	N	N	Y (4)
Connecticut	Y (9)	N	N	Y
Delaware	N	N	N	N
Florida	N	N	N	N
Idaho	Y (9)	N	N	Y (4)
Illinois	N	Y	Y	N
Indiana	N	N	N	N
Iowa	Y/N (9)	Y	Y	N
Kansas	Y/N (9)	N	N	Y (4)
Louisiana	N	Y	N	N
Maine	Y (9)	N	N	Y/N (4)
Maryland	Y (9)	N	Y (8)	N
Massachusetts	Y/N (9)	N	N	Y
Michigan	N	N	N	N
Minnesota	Y (9)	N	Y	Y
Mississippi	Y (9)	N	N	N
Missouri	N	N	N	N
Montana	N	N	N	N
Nevada	N	N	N	N
New Hampshire	N	N	N	N
New Jersey	— (6)	Y/N (7)	N	N
New Mexico	Y	N	Y (8)	N
New York	Y (9)	Y (10)	Y	N
North Carolina	N	N	Y (2)	N
North Dakota	N	N	Y	N
Ohio	N	N	N	N
Oklahoma	N	Y	Y	N

Table 2.--Presence of tracking system, nonprint policy, microformat program, or centralized publishing; Y (yes) or N (no) (con't)

STATE	Tracking System	Nonprint program	Microformat Program	Centralized Publishing
Pennsylvania	N	N	N	N
Rhode Island	Y/N (9)	N	N	N
South Carolina	Y (9)	N	N	N
South Dakota	N	Y/N (3)	N	N
Tennessee	N	N	N	Y (4)
Texas	N	Y (5)	Y	N
Vermont	N	N	N	N
Virginia	N	N	N	N
West Virginia	N	N	N	N
Wisconsin	Y (9)	N	N	N
Wyoming	N	N	N	N

(1) plan to implement with pending legislation (2) fiche sent to depositories selecting that format (3) depends on the format (4) some printing done by outside contractors (5) microforms only (6) question not answered (7) accepts any format available (8) fiche distributed if issued by agency in that format (9) agencies routinely contacted by phone, letter, etc. (10) except for electronic information.

Table 2 reflects the responses made to questions regarding the presence of features often associated with depository programs. Authorities were asked if their respective state programs had any of the following elements: 1) a tracking system, 2) a policy for nonprint items, 3) a microformat program, and 4) centralized publishing. If the answer was yes to any of the four questions, respondents were asked to further explain.

Just 24% of the authorities indicated the existence of a publications tracking system. Most of these respondents completed the question by indicating that the issuing agencies are routinely contacted through contact people, by phone, or by letter. These responses would suggest that tracking systems in place are primarily informal in nature. Results of the open-ended question reflect that in theory some form of a system may exist, but a more realistic picture was evident. The question generated from authorities comments like, "try to obtain," "very difficult to track," "success rate is so-so," and even more divulging, "politely twist arms." As noted earlier, a cooperative atmosphere between issuing agencies and the distribution center can influence the effectiveness of state depository legislation.

Eleven states reported having a microformat depository program. Three of these states further reported that fiche is distributed if publications are issued in that format by the agencies. The survey results would indicate that the presence of comprehensive microformat programs for state depositories is minimal. Marilyn Moody detailed several of the microformat programs in a 1985 article.[25] The number of such programs appears to have not changed significantly since that article was published.

Tracking publications and acquiring a sufficient number for distribution would be made easier if states had centralized publishing. Often though, agencies must contract printing jobs

with commercial firms that may not be familiar with state depository legislation. Only seven state authorities reported having centralized publishing with four of these states reporting that some printing is done by outside sources.

CONCLUSION

Librarians need several basic resources if they are to implement or administer any program successfully. Sufficient staff, time, and budget are essential elements necessary to carryout an effective, viable depository program. Reviewing the responses authorities made to the question pertaining to FTE (see Table 1), it is apparent that most state depository programs operate with a small staff. Nearly 65% of those answering the question indicated a FTE staff of two or less.

If maintaining selective depositories requires additional staff time, the lack of FTE staff may account for the low number of states with selective depositories. As suggested earlier it is important for depository program staff to be proactive. Until tracking systems and centralized publishing are prevalent, librarians will need to exert more time and energy in educating and informing state agencies of the value of depositing publications in the depository system. Improvements in depository legislation and program enhancements will only occur with the continued efforts made by librarians in developing a cooperative atmosphere between the agencies and the distribution center.

APPENDIX A March 1989

STATE PUBLICATIONS DEPOSITORY PROGRAM
S U R V E Y

1) Address of state depository distribution center:

_____

_____

_____

** Contact: _____

2) How many libraries participate in your state depository program:

Instate libraries _____ Out of State libraries _____ Total _____

a) number of full or complete depositories: _____
(receive & maintain all available publications)

b) number of selective depositories: _____
(receive & maintain a core collection)

3) If your state has selective depositories, when and how are items selected by the depositories, i.e., through checklists, predetermined issuing agencies, or subject areas? Please explain.

4) How many FTE staff work directly with your state's depository program: _____FTE

5) Are state agencies mandated by statutes or regulations to deposit publications with the depository program? YES _____ NO _____

6) What percent of state produced materials would you estimate <u>are</u> <u>not</u> properly deposited in your program: _____%

7) Does your state have a tracking system to identify and ensure that new publications are properly deposited with the depository program:

YES _____ NO _____

If yes, please explain.

8) Does your state have a policy regarding the acquisition and distribution of nonprint items, i.e., audiotapes, videotapes, films, information maintained on agencies' databases, etc. YES _____ NO _____

Please explain.

9) Does your state participate in a microformat depository program:

YES _____ NO _____

If yes, please explain.

10) Does your state participate in centralized publishing:

YES _____ NO _____

If yes, please explain.

Thanks again for your help and cooperation.

Please return survey to:

Mike Mitchell
Alaska State Library
P.O. Box G
Juneau, AK 99811

APPENDIX B

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DIVISION OF STATE LIBRARIES

Karen Crane, Director

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

Alaska State Library
Post Office Box G
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0571
Phone: (907) 465-2910

March 31, 1989

TO: State Documents Librarian
or
Publications Coordinator

FROM: Mike Mitchell
Alaska State Library
P.O. Box G
Juneau, AK 99811

The staff of the Alaska State Library is in the process of evaluating its state depository program. As part of this process, I am surveying states regarding several features of depository programs. It would be most helpful if you would complete the enclosed survey and return it in the enclosed SASE.

Survey results will be incorporated in a research paper and given to the Alaska State Library staff before proposals are made to upgrade the present program. In addition, I will submit the paper to the University of Hawaii Graduate School of Library and Information Studies later this year.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Mike Mitchell

Mike Mitchell

P.S. You may keep the enclosed pamphlet outlining our State's statutes regarding the depository program.

[17]

05-E8LH

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